

# **ANGOLA: ACCOUNTABLE, DEMOCRATIC AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT**

**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE**

**COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT NO. 654-A-00-99-00084-00**

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## **I. SUMMARY**

Despite continuing obstacles to basic democratic freedoms in Angola, NDI's constitutional program has had an impact on political reform on two levels: by challenging the perception that public policy forums have to be organized and controlled by the majority party and by providing opportunities for public input into forums around the country. NDI has utilized the public forums to facilitate public dialogue about democracy in Angola, putting members of parliament directly in contact with the public for the first time ever. NDI is also conducting a national radio campaign to educate people about the constitutional reform process. The program's impact has been substantial in changing the way Angolans approach political participation and in helping to create an expectation of accountability in governance.

Selected results this quarter include the following:

- During this period, the National Counseling Center's NDI-sponsored forums drew 1,135 participants (443 women, 692 men) for discussions that introduced members of parliament (MPs) to their constituents for debates over public policy.
- NDI partner Catholic University organized a constitutional forum from January 23 to 27 that brought together more than 1,000 party presidents, government officials, and leaders from churches, universities and associations to discuss different models of constitutional systems and to analyze the constitutional proposals of the parties.
- With assistance from NDI, partner MIACOOOP produced 13 radio debates on constitutional matters with Luanda Antena Comercial, often criticized for close ties to a political party. The debates elicited the participation of deputies, party leaders and experts. Callers totaled 93, of which 15 were women. In addition, the debates were translated into five national languages and broadcast nationwide – 65 programs in total were broadcast. This program has raised enormous interest, and Radio N'Gola Yetu expressed interest in continuing the program.
- As a result of civic education training conducted by NDI in partnership with the Angolan Non-Governmental Organization Horizonte, in the municipalities of Caxito, Musseque Quicoca, Musseque Capunga, Boge Grande, and Praia de Santiago, groups are being organized to monitor police and human rights abuse.
- Communities of the three southern provinces interested in the protection of their values and language, represented by sub-grantee ALSSA, met with key members of the Constitutional Commission and political parties to deliver the Lubango Declaration, wherein the rural communities and their local chiefs shared their views on the future constitution; previously, the voice of local authorities has been subjugated to the central power. The Secretary-General of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) met with ALSSA to discuss the involvement of civil society in the constitutional reform process.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### *Ongoing Armed Conflict*

During his year-end speech, President dos Santos declared that he was committed to holding general elections in the second half of 2002 but ruled out any renegotiation of the 1994 Lusaka peace accord with the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). He warned that a new round of bilateral talks with UNITA would likely "stimulate new adventures of a military nature" and stressed that peace means a resolution of the military conflict. The opposition denounced the President for delaying elections originally scheduled for this year, accusing the government of not doing enough groundwork to hold the elections and accused the MPLA of stalling the vote.

The MPLA's position is that only the capture of veteran guerrilla leader Jonas Savimbi would end the 26-year-old conflict, and the refusal to dialogue with Savimbi means that international initiatives for conferences on peace and reconciliation will likely not win Luanda's warm embrace. Although the government has all but won the conventional war, it has been unable to stem UNITA's hit-and-run raids that condemn Angola's interior to continued insecurity -- fighting has already displaced one-third of Angolans, and that figure is set to rise in 2001. Though the government claims to control 90 percent of the country, state forces are hard-pressed to guarantee the total safety of any area of the country. UNITA's high-profile attacks on Benguela airport in the south in December and the shelling of the northern town of Uíge in January and February have been dismissed by the authorities as temporary setbacks.

After almost 18 months out of the Angolan political scenario, UNITA's President Savimbi called Voice of America in March to give an interview in which he talked about the military situation, the state of the country, and how he is encouraged by the civil society dialogue initiatives. Savimbi declared that he was prepared to negotiate a definitive peace for Angola, although analysts have commented that Savimbi's interview is a new page in the complicated Angolan peace and reconciliation process, the MPLA statement said that Savimbi has not proposed a real solution to the conflict and that his call is in reaction to his belief that a Republican government in the U.S. might be more sympathetic to his cause.

In order to support the peace and reconciliation process, the government set up a Peace and Reconciliation Fund that will benefit Angolans who desert Savimbi under the amnesty law approved by the National Assembly last year. The fund is coordinated by the Minister of Interior, who is meeting with representatives of churches and political parties about what should be an agenda for peace. The positive aspect of this is that the government has lowered its voice in favor of war and is now timidly looking for a political solution to the conflict.

### *Constitutional Matters*

During the quarter, the Constitutional Commission met again in order to discuss remaining issues before beginning to draft a constitution: decentralization, number of parliamentary chambers and designation of the head of the government. After several heated meetings, the commission adopted a one-chamber system but announced plans to set up a Provincial Council, whose members would be nominated from a pool of traditional leaders and elected officials at the provincial level. Whether the President or the Prime Minister should be designated as head of state has not been resolved. On the issue of decentralization, the

positions between the majority party and the opposition are still diametrically opposed. The opposition favors elections of the governor and has said that this is the one issue that is non-negotiable. The MPLA calls for the nomination of governors as representatives of the central government. The Commission takes positions by consensus; if it cannot arrive at one, the issue will come up for a vote, where a simple numeric majority is needed. Since the MPLA has the majority, its views tend to prevail, as occurred in consideration of the criteria for national symbols. In order to overcome this obstacle, and to overcome this obstacle the opposition has employed the strategy of shifting debate to the National Assembly, which carries an important implication for the current debate: if decentralization comes up for vote, the MPLA position will prevail. The opposition might not have much maneuvering room, but it hopes that once a draft constitution reaches the National Assembly, the MPLA will concede the decentralization issue in exchange for a semi-presidential system with a strong president and a one-chamber Assembly.

For the past five months NDI's subgrantees have been conducting a survey on constitutional matters, including devolution of power. The results of the survey, with 300 respondents to date, support the positions taken by the opposition in the commission: an overwhelming majority 98 percent expressed a desire for direct election of the governors.

#### *Dissent Within the MPLA*

Recent events have highlighted the deep divergences within the MPLA. For the first time since the 1977s attempted coup d'état, two senior MPLA members, Lopo do Nascimento and Marcolino Moco, both ex-Prime Ministers and Secretaries General of the party, openly disagreed with the party during a forum about the "Multiple Consequences of the War" organized by the Open Society Institute. Nascimento and Moco criticized MPLA's policy and lack of political will to bring peace to Angola. Moco called on the party to organize a conference to discuss in-depth the situation of the country and to seek solutions. Nascimento argued for the election of governor as an important step in decentralizing power and promoting national reconciliation, a position completely different from the party. This departure might explain why the MPLA has decided to reach a solution by consensus in the Constitutional Commission on this issue, as opposed to seeking a vote. In addition, given the differences within the majority party, the survey work on key constitutional matters carried out by NDI's partners has a greater chance of being used to bolster the positions of the Constitution drafters.

#### *Other Political Developments*

The year saw a new beginning in the opposition, which began taking common positions on a number of key issues. In January, the opposition refused to participate in the election of the Auditor General claiming that voting was biased since the candidate favored by the MPLA was also a deputy in the National Assembly.

In February, the opposition demanded that the Head of the Government present the state budget. Since the President has not nominated a Prime Minister since December 1998, he is by default the Head of the State. The majority party tried to dissuade the opposition, with no success, thus forcing the National Assembly to vote on whether it would accept the Minister of Interior, who had been nominated by the President, to fulfill the role; the MPLA majority voted yes. These events underscore the issue of whether, as the opposition alleges, the President is violating the Constitution and concentrating power by not naming a Prime

Minister. This issue has been repeatedly raised during NDI-sponsored debates, most recently in January during a constitutional forum at the Catholic University.

Regionally, Angola suffered a humiliating defeat before the Southern African Development Community (SADC) when its candidate for Secretary General, Eng. Albina Assis, was placed fourth in a list of five candidates, a wake up call to Angola that, if it wishes to play a significant role in the SADC, it must show commitment. The systematic absence of the President and key Angolan figures in regional events has relegated Angola to a secondary role.

### *Geographic Factors Relevant to NDI's Program*

Political freedoms are at risk as accusations of harassment have spread throughout the country and the government violently crushed a peaceful march. Tolerance for political dissent is still a weakness in Angola's democracy; some of the participants in NDI-sponsored events have been harassed or intimidated and NDI has sought protection for these citizens through human rights organization. Low political tolerance is a characteristic shared by most provinces. In Huambo, Pedro Chilombe, a 48-year-old displaced man from Bailundo (UNITA's bastion up until 2000) expressed the common sense of fear: "If you tell the truth, they will come in the dawn and kill you; it happened in the past, and it happens now."

In 1975, UNITA proclaimed at Huambo the independence of Angola at the same time that MPLA did it in Luanda. During the Marxist period led by MPLA, Huambo became one of the most important battle scenes, since it was considered a UNITA stronghold. In 1992, after UNITA won the elections in the province, MPLA members and sympathizers were sought out and killed during a heavy battle, known as the "55-Day Battle." When the city was retaken by government troops in 1994, its infrastructure was destroyed; a city that was once one of the most in Angola was transformed into ruins. Huambo continues to be hotly disputed by the MPLA and UNITA in their efforts to consolidate their constituencies. However, those plans contradict with the incredible poverty of its citizens in a city where more than 60 percent are displaced people, a fate shared by Malange, which is considered the nursery of the Angolan army liberation struggle. It has been a strategic base for MPLA and in the 1992 elections UNITA did not elect any representative in that constituency. However, the MPLA elected government could not guarantee protection or food when the city was bombed and mined by UNITA troops in retaliation to the electoral results.

## **II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

NDI's three subgrantees have completed with success their projects, and two of them, the Journalists Association of Angola (MIACOOOP) and the Associação Leonardo Sikufinde Shalom Angola (ALSSA), are preparing their final reports and evaluations, while the National Counseling Centre (NCC) has already submitted its report. The three sub-grantees demonstrated good capacity in designing, implementing their projects and in managing the project finances and were open and supportive, with a sense of partnership and willingness to learn. During the quarter, NDI also engaged in program activities with the Law School of the Catholic University.

Partners reported very important feedback, including that of MPs, members of the governments, NGOs, churches, communities and citizens. This feedback will be discussed in the program's final report.

Overall, NDI reached 1,135 citizens directly through the community meetings and indirectly through 79 radio debates broadcast by two independent and one governmental radio stations. Despite the weakness of Angola's communication system, 93 citizens called during the radio programs to question and contribute to the debate. The debates involved 57 speakers, of which 17 are parliamentarians, members of the Constitutional Commission.

Following is a more detailed description of each partner's activities.

### National Counseling Center (NCC)

#### NDI: Geographical Coverage and Number of People Reached, January to March

NCC - Community Meetings		
	Number of Participants	
	Women	Men
Benguela	231	369
Huambo	75	25
Kwanza Norte	90	90
Malanje	40	171
Luanda	7	37
TOTAL	443	692
Catholic University		
Luanda	409	673
Survey on Constitutional Matter		
Responses	11	38
MIACOOOP - Radio Debates		
Programs in Luanda	13	
Programs in Benguela	1	
Programs on Radio N'Gola Yetu (national coverage)	65	
Speakers	57	
...of whom MPs	17	
Callers	93	
...of whom women	15	

The public forum program "Talk to the People, Not in their Name" enjoys a broad base of support among the Deputies who have participated in the program and among the communities in which the events have been held. Even the President of the National Assembly has voiced support for this kind of activity: "MPs' visits to the provinces are not only beneficial, but also necessary, since they travel so little to the provinces. We have to encourage this kind of projects and reach even the municipal and local levels."

At the planning stage, staff members from NDI and NCC met as a team to decide where and when the next program would take place, and what would be an appropriate topic of discussion for that area. They also discussed which Deputies would be appropriate to invite based on the subject matter, linguistic capability and constituency. Typically one member of the team would travel to the region at least a month in advance in order to consult with traditional leaders, church leaders, NGOs, civic leaders, school principals and others about the design of the program. If the community was receptive, the team extended an invitation to the Deputies, notifying them of the precise date, time, location, and estimated audience size of the forum. At least one member of the team would typically travel with the Deputies to the event.

The public meetings were the first in most of the provinces where NCC worked. During the meetings citizens most often questioned the MP about the government policies for improving their living status and ending the war. The citizens of Ndalatando seemed to agree January 17 that, for them, a true peace accord should only be reached throughout a serious negotiated agreement. "Saying that we'll get peace through military means, will perpetuate people's suffering," said Mário João, a teacher in Ndalatando. His view was shared by the participants in NDI-sponsored activities. In Huambo January 20, citizens reported that a solution to the Angolan war could only be achieved if Savimbi were given an opportunity to discuss a real cease-fire.

Forum participants were nearly unanimous in demanding that the National Assembly engage in nationwide consultations about the constitutional process. In Benguela, citizens

recommended that the Constitutional Commission set specific committees, whose mission would be the promotion of free debate and encourage citizens' participation in the elaboration of the future constitution.

In Malange and Ndalantando, citizens accused their governors of mismanagement, corruption, power abuses and prosecution of political opponents. In Malange citizens had prepared a letter, which they asked the deputy to deliver to the president, that seeks the immediate replacement of their governor. A common theme raised in all meetings was the widespread opinion that provincial governors should be elected instead of appointed. The people feel that this would be a step forward in terms of ensuring greater accountability and better management.

**Public Forums: Meetings between Members of Parliament and Constituents**

Topic	MP and Political Party	Venue and Date	Women	Men	Total
The interrelation between The National Assembly and the Communities	Alexandre André <i>Party of Alliance Youth Factory-workers and Farmers (PAJOCA)</i>	Ndalatando January 17	90	90	180
The importance of citizen's participation in constitutional making process	Lindo Bernardo Silva <i>Party of Social Renewal (PRS)</i>	Huambo January 20	75	25	100
Citizens' participation in local governance; The Citizens and the constitution	Benjmim Paiva <i>Party of Social Renewal (PRS)</i>	Malanje January 25 and 26	40	171	211
The National Assembly and the citizens	Abel Chivukuvuku <i>Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)</i>	Benguela February 8	231	369	600
Democracy and Cultural Identity	Moisés Kamabaia <i>Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)</i>	Luanda February 16	7	37	44
<b>TOTALS:</b>			<b>443</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>1135</b>

The visits to the provinces have been a good barometer of the government's willingness to allow political work in the provinces. Of all the visits organized by NCC, the last one to Benguela caused the most negative reaction from the President of the National Assembly. Abel Chivukuvuku, who was UNITA's bench leader before the emergence of UNITA Renovada visited Benguela, invited four other UNITA deputies to accompany him on his visit to the province. In their meeting with the Governor of Benguela, the Governor appealed to the deputies to increase the Benguela share of the budget. However, a day later the provincial government informed the deputies that they had to leave the province within 24 hours by order of the President of the National Assembly. Chivukuvuku protested the order and declared that the President of the National Assembly did not have the jurisdiction to intercede in constituent meetings. Chivukuvuku accused the National Assembly president of acting unconstitutionally because he had given no justifiable reason to suspend the visit. The deputies refused to respect the order and continued their program.

Despite real barriers to democratic openness, NDI's program was able to organize and mobilize deputies to participate in open forums. In addition, despite the heavy hand of the government and the MPLA, the deputies have gained some courage to demand political space. NCC is discussing with MPs a follow-up strategy to solve the problems raised during the public forums.

## **b) ALSSA**

Following the public forum held in the South last year, ALSSA prepared a document, referred to as the “Lubango Declaration,” detailing the input of the communities to the Constitutional process. In January, participants traveled to Luanda to present the Lubango Declaration to the Constitutional Commission and to the president of the National Assembly; however, they were refused a meeting with the National Assembly. NDI and ALSSA will share this and other reports summarizing the constitutional inputs from these communities with the Constitutional Commission.

During the community meetings, NCC has also been distributing a questionnaire about key constitutional matters. The results will be compiled and sent to the Constitutional Commission and political parties.

## **c) MIACOOOP**

NDI’s media partners, the Journalist Association (MIACOOOP), continued producing radio debates this quarter. The panelists have been a mix of constitutionalists, MPs and civil society representatives. During the first half-hour of the debate, a constitutionalist or deputy explains the issue, followed by a debate where listeners can call in.

In the provinces, MIACOOOP’s radio debates are broadcast over local independent radio stations in the provincial capitals.

- During this reporting period, MIACOOOP organized radio debates in Benguela with six speakers, including Deputy Chivukuvuku from UNITA and three personalities from Benguela.
- In Luanda, MIACOOOP produced 13 weekly two-hour radio debates broadcasted by Luanda Antena Comercial (LAC). The programs are translated into five national languages, which are broadcast in Angola’s National Radio station, Radio N’Gola Yetu, throughout the country.

The topics discussed have included key constitutional issues including the fundamental principles of systems of government, local power, and the control of constitutionality. The programs have been very popular, and Radio N’Gola Yetu has been inundated with letters and calls from all over the country, from outside the country, expressing interest in the program. The station has requested the continuation of the program and has suggested debates in the national languages, as opposed to transmitting a translation. Deputies Chivukuvuku and Alexandre André have agreed to participate in future debates. NDI is contacting other deputies to ensure a broad partisan participation and is identifying a constitutionalist fluent in a national language who might participate.

In addition, MIACOOOP is negotiating with the provincial sub-stations of the state owned radio station, Radio Nacional de Angola (RNA), to be able to work with them in the provinces where there are no independent radio stations. MIACOOOP is seeking this authorization, and all indications are that RNA’s General Director is open to the idea whereas RNA's information sector has requested a detailed analysis of MIACOOOP’s operations before agreeing.

## **d) Catholic University**

NDI supported the Law School of the Catholic University in the organization of a week-long Constitutional Forum, held in January, whose groups were parliamentary parties, universities and churches. Over the six days, more than 1,000 people participated, as well as about one-third of MPs. The President of the National Assembly opened the event, calling for a wide debate on the constitution and explicitly recognizing the need to actively promote such events.

The event was intended mainly as an academic debate on constitutional matters, but it provided the opportunity for a frank dialogue on the present political situation. Participants discussed the fact that the post of prime minister has remained unfilled for the last two years and that the President of Angola has been occupying the role of both Head of State and as Head of Government; a well-known Angolan constitutionalist argued that the President was acting in violation of the constitution by not naming a Head of Government. The mere fact that such an issue was debated in an academic forum is an indicator of democratic progress in Angola.

Another issue that was hotly debated was the participation of women in politics. The NDI-sponsored Nigerian speaker, Dr. Jadesola Akande, argued for setting quotas within political parties as the stepping stone towards an effective promotion of women in the political arena. In a subsequent meeting, women parliamentarians expressed their interest in exploring further some of Dr. Akande's recommendations. The other NDI-sponsored speaker, Judge Kriegler, made a brilliant presentation on the control of constitutionality by the Constitutional Court. During their one-week stay in Angola, Akande and Kriegler met with members of the Constitutional Commission, including its president. At the end of his visit, Judge Kriegler concluded that deputies have no incentive to negotiate benefiting more from the status quo. Given this scenario, the work with civil society to create pressure and incentives for change are important.

### **III. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

NDI's program produced the following results and accomplishments, presented according to USAID's intermediate results (IR) statements:

#### *IR 2.1. Greater availability of information on key issues*

- NDI partner Catholic University organized a constitutional forum from January 23 to 27 that brought together more than 1,000 party presidents, government officials, and leaders from churches, universities and associations to discuss different models of constitutional systems and to analyze the constitutional proposals of the parties.
- NDI organized a meeting inviting professional women and women parliamentarians, where Professor Akande from Nigeria shared her experience in increasing women's participation in politics. Participants, in particular parliamentarians, showed great interest in learning more about how to promote greater participation of women in political processes.
- With assistance from NDI, partner MIACOOB produced 13 radio debates on constitutional matters with Luanda Antena Comercial, often criticized for close ties to the MPLA. The debates elicited the participation of deputies, party leaders and



experts. Callers totaled 93, of which 15 were women. In addition, the debates were translated into five national languages and broadcast nationwide – 65 programs in total were broadcast. This program has raised enormous interest, and Radio N’Gola Yetu expressed interest in continuing the program.

- MIACOOOP also organized and produced one radio debate in Benguela.
- ALSSA released the Lubango Declaration and distributed it to about 300 people.
- ALSSA distributed the results of a survey of about 250 citizens on constitutional issues.

#### *IR 2.2. Improved civic advocacy on key issues*

- The community of Quicolo, Luanda province, was suffering because there was no stop for the public bus, thus limiting the mobility of the community since the only transport available was privately run and beyond the financial means of community members. This had a dramatic impact on their ability to trade and purchase goods, seek medical care, and work. During the public forum, the community requested the assistance of Deputy Carlos Calitas from UNITA, who relayed their concerns to authorities. The community now has a bus stop and has sent a letter to Deputy Calitas thanking him for the assistance.
- The residents of Km9 in Viana, during their meeting with Deputy Manuel Saviemba of UNITA, accused the local administrator of selling the same plot of land to different individuals. After the community meeting, the deputy spoke to the provincial administrator, and, since then, the local administrator and all of his team have been fired.
- The Tala-Hady neighborhood in Canzenga went without electricity for three years prior to the Public Forum held there in December 2000. During the forum, community members raised the issue with Deputy Benjamim Paiva of the PRS, who promptly returned to Luanda and successfully petitioned the government on their behalf. They now have electricity.
- Residents of Cazenga were unable to afford to send their children to the local school built by the Eduardo dos Santos Foundation, as the school fees were set far beyond their means. The community used the public forum in November 2000 to enlist the help of Deputy Paiva, who spoke to the Governor on their behalf. The school has now agreed to allow local children to attend the school at a reduced rate.
- The Community of Malange used the public forum in January to submit a letter to the President of Angola requesting that the Governor be replaced. They delivered it to the Deputy and demanded that he in turn deliver it to the President.
- As a result of civic education work by NDI in 2000 in partnership with the Angolan Non-Governmental Organization Horizonte, in the municipalities of Caxito, Musseque Quicoca, Musseque Capunga, Boge Grande, and Praia de Santiago, groups are being organized to monitor police and human rights abuse.
- Less than a month after the Catholic University conference, opposition parties in the National Assembly raised the potentially unconstitutional character of the President’s failure to name a Head of Government (*see Section II, “Constitutional Matters”*).

#### *IR 2.3. Improved citizen-government collaboration to promote democratic processes*

- NDI partner NCC conducted six community meetings between deputies and citizens in five provinces, the first time since the 1992 elections that deputies have been actively engaged in meeting their constituents. The meetings involved some 1,135 people, including 443 women. The forums are yielding measurable results at fostering collaboration and communication between Deputies in Parliament and otherwise isolated communities on the ground. Due to the lack of communication between government and people on the ground, the forums are often the first time participants in these communities are hearing about the constitutional process that has been taking place since 1997. In Luanda, 41% of the participants said that the forum was the first time they had met and spoken to a deputy, and all indicated that they would like to have more such meetings.
- Communities of the three southern provinces interested in the protection of their values and language, represented by a delegation of sub-grantee ALSSA, met with key members of the Constitutional Commission and political parties to deliver the Lubango Declaration, wherein the rural communities and their local chiefs shared their views on the future constitution; previously, the voice of local authorities has been subjugated to the central power. The Secretary-General of the MPLA met with ALSSA to discuss the involvement of civil society in the constitutional reform process. The delegation included two women who addressed in particular their concerns about youth, issues such as education and access for young girls to bars/restaurants/discos.
- The Lubango Declaration was distributed to 300 people including party leaders, civic organizations, opinion formers, experts and the diplomatic community.
- NDI partner Catholic University brought together about 1,000 participants, including party presidents, government officials, and leaders from churches, universities and associations, to discuss different models of constitutional systems and to analyze the constitutional proposals of the nine parties.
- The Secretary-General of the MPLA and deputies from UNITA representing different factions within the party each met with NDI staff and the NDI-sponsored participants of the Constitutional Forum organized by the Catholic University.
- The Secretary-General of the MPLA and bench leaders of the opposition parties met with the ALSSA delegation to discuss the results and recommendations of the Lubango Conference.

#### **IV. EVALUATION**

In most cases, the parliamentarians who participated in provincial public forums were meeting their constituents for the first time. The forums are changing the relationship between parliament and civil society by reinforcing a responsibility to be accountable to the citizenry. As a result, important political issues that once were unmentionable in the presence of government officials have now become part of the public domain. Foremost among them issues is the persistent perception of widespread corruption at the highest levels of Angolan government. The constitutional forums have facilitated a greater openness in Angolan society at a time of increasing censorship and repression toward critics of the government. As a result, civil society has been empowered to become more active in its calls for greater transparency and accountability in governance. It is hoped that these positive interactions between government and communities will lay the foundation for further collaboration and communication on issues of governance.

The forums and radio debates have also affected the constitutional process. One of the main disagreements between the ruling party and opposition concerns devolution. The opposition favors greater devolution and the election of provincial governors, while the ruling party favors appointments by the central government. However, due to repeated calls for the election of provincial governors during forums around the country, civil society has demonstrated that there is universal demand for greater devolution in the next constitution. The deputies have taken their cue from citizens' demands. Citizens from across the country have expressed themselves in a multitude of ways, from questionnaires to radio debates and participation in public forums.

This sense of empowerment has contributed to a political change in Angola. Criticism of the government, particularly the president, is now common among the independent media and political opposition. The Angolan government, nervous about declining popular support with elections on the horizon, has been forced to accept a level of criticism that was previously unthinkable. Repeated crackdowns on dissent have not quelled the growing activism. One opposition party, PADPA, even sent an open letter to the president demanding that he account for his actions regarding reports of corrupt activities involving international arms transfers with several French officials. The party organized a public demonstration outside the presidential palace when the president did not respond. The Angolan government reacted by sending riot police to disperse the protesters, and condemning the party's leadership for its slanderous letter. The government was also forced to shut down local radio stations covering the story for "excessive transparency."

While increasing public participation in the constitutional process, the forums also have had an impact on intra-party relations in Angola. At one forum in Benguela, the provincial governor put aside party differences to ask a parliamentarian who represents the UNITA opposition party for greater support from the central government. The request opened a wider discussion on matters of intergovernmental coordination that transcended party identification, a first in the modern history of Angola. Most observers predict that the next Angolan elections will take place in early 2003. Due to the burgeoning power of civil society it is clear that the ruling party will be forced to make substantial political reforms before that time if it is to remain in power.

Deputies participating in the program have been extremely supportive of its continuation because the informality of the program allows them to speak freely and act as advocates for the communities they are visiting. We know this is true because of the positive feedback Deputies have shared with NDI and their colleagues in Parliament. Communities participating in the forums routinely "demand" that the Deputies respond to their needs and to engage more actively in solving their daily problems.

The forums, which have gathered crowds of up to 1,000, operate on a bare-bones budget. Frills such as per diem, tea, coffee, and even water are not served. In the word of one organizer, "the people are suffering, the need no other motivation to participate." Even the organizing partners, due to budget constraints; have operated for months without pay. Some deputies have even traveled at their own cost (or the political parties') to participate. Indeed, demand is so great for dialogue that the forums are routinely extended by two hours or more.

## **V. MANAGEMENT**

During January, NDI held an annual meeting of its Southern Africa Chiefs of Party, in South Africa. The topics focused on challenges facing NDI, Malawi's experience in obtaining funds from other donors besides the traditional USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy, and the closure of NDI's South Africa office.

In February, NDI Southern Africa Deputy Director Julie Hughes visited Angola for three days. This was her first visit to the country, and the objective was to learn more about the program and our partners. While in Luanda, she had an opportunity to meet two representatives of NDI's of our sub-grantees, NCC and MIACOOOP. She also worked with the team in developing more reliable and systematic tools to analyze the impact of our program.

**Workshop on Performance Management Plan, Namibe province, March 21 to 23** – Isabel Emerson and Augusto Santana participated in a USAID workshop devoted to reviewing the Performance Management Plan of each of USAID's partners and to identifying areas of synergy between Democracy and Governance partners and USAID's other two strategic objectives (health and food security).

**Training on Subgrantee Management and Performance Management Plan, Luanda, March 26 to 29** – Lesley Stein and Sander Schultz, NDI's Regional Accountant and NDI's Financial Director, visited Angola from March 24 to 27 to conduct training on sub-grant management. NDI's three sub-grant partners, as well as NDI's Augusto Santana and Mauricio de Oliveira, participated. On the workshop's last day, Isabel Emerson introduced subgrantee partners to USAID's five-year strategy and to the Performance Management Plan. During the sessions, participants discussed the method of data analysis, data collection and quality. In addition, participants also had the opportunity to discuss their last programs and set up ways for collaboration in the future.

## **VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

NDI is preparing a one-year extension of its program.